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	EURA/WE/CM 14 May 1985	(1 2
	With the administrative elections behind them, Italian politicians are now turning their attention to the presidential election. Balloting to choose President Pertini's successor is not expected to begin before 23 June, and it may be a few weeks yet before the maneuvering gets seriously underway.	25
	The public has no direct say in this contest. The Italian President is elected by a special electoral college consisting of nearly 1000 members. (Both houses of parliament along with three representatives from nineteen of the country's 20 regions and one representative from the smallest region, Valle d'Aosta.) A candidate needs a three-quarters majority to win during the first three ballots; thereafter, an absolute majority suffices. Because it is virtually impossible for any candidate to win three-quarters of the vote, the election usually requires multiple ballots that more often than not lead to compromise candidates and surprise results.	e t
	The presidency has been primarily a ceremonial post throughout most of the Republic's forty years, but President Pertini has demonstrated clearly that the job is an important reservoir of potential power. For example, through his rulings on whether to proceed with early national elections and his choices of Prime Ministers Pertini has exerted a strong influence on the direction of Italian politics.	X1
1 (1	Pertini is eligible to seek a second term Press, Embassy, all suggested earlier this spring that if Pertini left the race, Vice Premier Arnaldo Forlani, a Christian Democrat, would probably be the strongest candidate.	25 2
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	25X1
At first glance, the governing coalition's st	rona
performance in last week's administrative election	s is likely to
encourage the five parties of the coalition to coa	lesce behind a
popular moderate candidate like Forlani. Rumors o	f the deal with
Craxi reportedly have angered some members of both parliamentary delegations, however, and it is not	parties'
Forlani will be able to rally enough support from w	within the 25X1
governing coalition.	2001
5	
For their part, the Communists have stated put	olicly that
they intend to support Pertini. We suspect that the forward Communist Lower Chamber President Nilde Jot	ney will put
stalking horse, however, if Pertini does not run.	Communict
leaders have told US officials that they oppose For	·lani.
practically guaranteeing that he can not be elected	l durina the
first three rounds. If the governing coalition is	divided over
for lani, the Communists' numerical strength among t	he electors
would enable them to exert a strong influence on the selection.	e final 25X1
seree cron.	25/(1
Several other prominent personalities are in t	he running and
Should forlant talter, any of the following could e	merge as a
compromise candidate: Leopoldo Elia, a former Chri	stian
Democratic President of the Constitutional Court, T	ina Anselmi, a
former Christian Democratic President of the Senate Scalfaro, Christian Democratic Minister of the Inte	; Oscar 25X1
Giovanni Spadolini, Republican Minister of Defense.	rior; and
·	
Several long-time aspirants for the office, in	cluding
Christian Democrats such as former Senate President	Fanfani and
Foreign Minister Andreotti, may throw their hats in	the ring.
But some, like Andreotti, are tainted by scandal an as Fanfani. have lost ground in their parties in re	d others, such
The state of the s	25X1
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